

Report to NRSP-6 Technical Committee, June 2004

Northeast Region Representative: Walter De Jong

Summary of requests for Northeastern region:

STOCK: 20
BREEDING: 120
GENETICS: 60

Comments made by those who requested germplasm in 2003:

1. The most interesting and thought-provoking remarks were made by Will Bonsall of the Scatterseed Project (Farmington, Maine). I have not met or spoken to him previously. In a phone conversation it became clear that he was very familiar with the Sturgeon Bay Genebank. He spoke highly of the operation and noted that "Max Martin and John Bamberg know their stuff and are both very helpful".

Concerning possible improvements: asked whether it was possible to devote more effort to maintaining clones of varieties rather than just genes from wild species. He recognizes that maintaining clones is much more laborious than maintaining true seed, and that emphasis on maintaining genes has historically been very important in serving breeders at land grant institutions. Nevertheless, he is increasingly being asked to supply older varieties to Living History Museums, as well as to organic growers, and felt that modern breeding efforts for niche markets occasionally and unknowingly seek to reinvent old cultivars that are now extinct.

2. Breeder Zenaida Ganga (U. Maine) is relatively new to her position. Noted the genebank provides very good service – samples arrive in about a week. This stood in contrast to her experience requesting material from other genebanks when she worked as a potato breeder in the Philippines. Germination of true seed has been good. She definitely would like to see the potato genebank program continue.

3. Mark Lichtenwalner, Winrock International (Macungie, Pennsylvania). Mark is trying to develop TPS varieties adapted to Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan has no certified seed industry to speak of and cannot readily import seed from abroad. After requesting germplasm Mark has not typically received confirmation that his request is being processed, but is nevertheless happy that "it soon just shows up" in his mailbox. The genebank has also been very helpful to him in the past in providing TPS lines developed at CIP.

4. Laura Miller (Cornell University) requested clones that are being used as virus differentials.

5. Walter De Jong (Cornell University). We continue to make frequent use of clones that have *S. berthaultii*, *S. andigena*, and *S. vernei* in their pedigree in our breeding program. From *berthaultii* we are most interested in accessing resistance to insects, while from *andigena* we are working to harness high dry matter and resistance to late blight, and from *vernei* resistance to a new race of the golden cyst nematode.